

As we put 2009 on the shelf and move quickly into a new year, it is appropriate to reflect on the past year's most significant events.

It has become a tradition in my office to issue a year-end report to constituents. These reports detail my efforts in Washington and provide commentary on pressing matters before our nation. The "2009 Year-End Report," which was recently sent to First District constituents, can also be found on the homepage of my website, [fortenberry.house.gov](http://fortenberry.house.gov).

As you know, 2009 was a challenging year in many respects. In Nebraska, we were fortunate to avoid the most devastating impacts of a severe national economic downturn. Much of this can be attributed to our cultural heritage unique to the prairie Heartland. We are proud to represent in many ways what's best about America – hard work, responsibility, commitment to family and community. Due in large part to these attributes, we weathered 2009's difficult economic times with an uncommon resilience and strength. In fact, Nebraska received national attention throughout 2009 for top rankings in various surveys of best states for jobs, small businesses, and family life.

We are not immune, however, to the ill effects of economic hardship, social duress, and international instability. To address these challenges, my work in Congress continues to be guided by five fundamental principles: strengthening national security and global stability; creating patient-centered health care; promoting economic opportunity through small business entrepreneurship, strong local economic connectedness and rural vitality; developing clean, renewable energy sources for a sustainable energy future; and upholding family life and culture.

Using a framework of these priorities, the 2009 year-end report focuses much attention on our nation's important discussion on strengthening health care, our efforts to regain financial stability through the creativity of small businesses and strong local economies, and the critical importance of maintaining our national security while promoting global stability and human rights.

The report also offers highlights of my office's work in Nebraska communities throughout the year. I think you might find it a useful news summary to conclude 2009 and look ahead to 2010. Please visit [fortenberry.house.gov](http://fortenberry.house.gov) and click "Year-End Report" to see for yourself. There, you can also sign up for my regular email newsletter "The Fort Report" and join me in using new communications tools such as Facebook and Twitter. As always, I appreciate any input you might have and look forward to continued communication with you in the new year.